

Noted

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Body

A quarter of a million poetry books sold

251,354.

That's how many poetry volumes were sold in Canada in 2019. Actually, they're "poetry category units" according to BookNet Canada, the organization that measures sales in this country; it's about to release these numbers in its 2019 Canadian Book Market survey. And those quarter of a million sales were worth \$5,829,054.38 to the overall books industry. That represents 1.9 per cent of the entire nonfiction category of books.

That sounds great until we look at the 2018 numbers, provided by BookNet in its Canadian Book Market survey for that year. In 2018, there were 483,675 poetry units sold, with a value of \$11,110,395.66. Of the entire nonfiction category it accounted for 3.2 per cent.

What's the difference? Rupi Kaur and other big-selling poets. In 2018, Kaur alone sold about 150,000 units; in 2019 about 50,000.

Have your say - and Watch Your Head

I've always thought poetry can change the world - it can open your mind and change how you think, and show you a whole new world. Western University English professor Kathryn Mockler thinks so, too, and she wants anyone who believes they have something to say about climate change to submit to her "Watch Your Head" anthology. It's an offshoot of watchyourhead.ca, a website set up to share ideas and draw attention to issues related to "the climate crisis and climate justice." You have until Feb. 16 to tell the editors what you think in poems, art, video, prose. And you don't have to be a published writer or even part of a literary community to do it. Submissions will be selected to be published - some on the website, some in the print anthology and, who knows, if you're lucky you may end up in both. The anthology will be published in print by Coach House Press this summer; the website will, hopefully, live forever.

Canada Reads fiction and nonfiction, but no poetry here

Some people like the idea, some don't - Does it make reading books seem too good for you? Can't books simply be entertaining? Why should we trust celebrities' opinions about books, anyway? - but it's Canada Reads time again. Five books have been nominated for the venerable CBC competition that has celebrities battle it out to determine the one volume all of us should read this year (the theme being: "one book to bring Canada into focus"). The 2020 short list: NBA TV host Akil Augustine defends "Radicalized" by Cory Doctorow; "Handmaid's Tale" actor Amanda Brugel defends "We Have Always Been Here" by Samra Habib; country singer George Canyon defends "From The Ashes" by Jesse Thistle; YouTube creator Alayna Fender defends "Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club" by Megan Gail Coles; and "Letterkenny" actor Kaniehtiio Horn defends "Son of a Trickster" by Eden Robinson. No poetry, but some very poetic writing.

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